

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An orthopaedic component for engagement to the human body, comprising:
  - a component body; and
  - an RFID tag configured for storing information related to the orthopaedic component, said RFID tag associated with said component body so that the stored information can be accessed by an independent reader.
2. The orthopaedic component of claim 1, wherein said RFID tag is embedded within the component body.
3. The orthopaedic component of claim 2, wherein:
  - said component body is a molded body; and
  - said RFID tag is molded within said molded body.
4. The orthopaedic component of claim 2, wherein:
  - said component body defines a cavity sized to receive said RFID tag therein; and
  - said component body includes a cover closing said cavity with said RFID tag embedded therein.
5. The orthopaedic component of claim 4, wherein said cover is a biocompatible potting material.
6. The orthopaedic component of claim 5, wherein said potting material is a bone cement.
7. The orthopaedic component of claim 4, wherein said cover is a biocompatible metal, a biocompatible polymer, or a biocompatible composite material.

8. The orthopaedic component of claim 1, wherein said RFID tag includes:
  - a transmission receiver configured for receiving external transmissions;
  - an information storage element; and
  - a control circuit electrically connected between said receiver and said storage element and operable to activate said storage element in response to an external transmission.
9. The orthopaedic component of claim 8, wherein said transmission receiver operates as a passive power supply for said RFID tag.
10. The orthopaedic component of claim 8, wherein said information storage element has read/write capabilities.
11. The orthopaedic component of claim 10, wherein said information storage element includes an EEPROM.
12. The orthopaedic component of claim 1, further comprising:
  - a housing defining a cavity sized for receiving said RFID tag embedded therein; and
  - an engagement feature defined between said housing and said component body.
13. The orthopaedic component of claim 12, wherein said engagement feature includes:
  - a recess defined in said component body; and
  - an engagement element defined on said housing, said engagement element configured for engagement within said recess.

14. The orthopaedic component of claim 13, wherein said engagement element is configured for press-fit engagement within said recess.

15. The orthopaedic component of claim 14, wherein said engagement element is configured for a taper-fit engagement.

16. The orthopaedic component of claim 13, wherein said engagement element is configured for slip-fit, snap-fit, or threaded fit engagement within said recess.

17. A method for associating information related to an orthopaedic component with the component comprising the steps of:

storing information related to the orthopaedic component in an information storage device;

engaging the information storage device to the orthopaedic component;  
and

remotely accessing the information stored in the information storage device.

18. The orthopaedic component of claim 17, wherein the step of remotely accessing occurs before the orthopaedic component is implanted in a patient.

19 The orthopaedic component of claim 17, wherein the step of remotely accessing occurs after the orthopaedic component is implanted in a patient.

20 The orthopaedic component of claim 17, wherein the stored information is stored in the information storage device during the manufacture of the orthopaedic component and includes one or more of the following:

product identification;

part number;  
batch number;  
manufacturer;  
manufacture date; and  
inspection information.

21 The orthopaedic component of claim 17, wherein the stored information is stored in the information storage device by the caregiver implanting the orthopaedic component.

22 The orthopaedic component of claim 21, wherein the stored information includes one or more of the following:

patient identification;  
patient medical history;  
caregiver information; and  
date of implant surgery.